

June 23 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Rural communities cannot rely on agriculture alone to sustain their economy and quality of life. That is why, throughout my Administration, I have strongly supported increasing the investments in rural development, and pushed to find innovative solutions to unique local needs. We worked hard with the Congress in the 1996 Farm Act to create the Fund for Rural America, which provided funds for rural development and innovative agricultural research. I am pleased that S. 1150 provides \$300 million for the Fund and extends its funding through FY 2003.

While signing S. 1150, I am concerned that some in the Congress are already threatening to block significant portions of its funds from being spent in FY 1999. Appropriation actions

in the House and Senate would deny any funds from being used for the Fund for Rural America, and the House bill would also block any research funding in this bill from going forward next year. I strongly object to such ill-advised cuts in these vital programs. I call on the Congress to provide the needed funds for these important activities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 23, 1998.

NOTE: S. 1150, approved June 23, was assigned Public Law No. 105-185.

Statement on Signing the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998 *June 23, 1998*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1900, the "U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Act of 1998." This legislation is the result of the bipartisan support of the Congress, and the efforts of many people inside and outside of government who have worked to achieve its passage. It represents an important step in advancing the United States Government's efforts to bring justice to Holocaust victims, survivors, and their heirs.

The bill establishes the "Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States." The Commission will focus on two key tasks: first, it will conduct original research on the collection and disposition of Holocaust-era assets that came under the control of the United States Government after Hitler came to power in 1933 (assets including gold, gems, bank accounts, financial instruments, insurance policies, and art works); and second, it will review research already conducted by public and private

entities. The Commission will prepare a final report, summarizing its findings and making recommendations to me, which will be completed by December 31, 1999.

As we finish the business of the 20th century, we must examine difficult aspects of our history in order to build a better world for our children in the next millennium. Establishing a Commission to study these issues sends a strong message, both at home and abroad, that the United States Government is determined to acknowledge and address the fate of Holocaust assets domestically.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 23, 1998.

NOTE: S. 1900, approved June 23, was assigned Public Law No. 105-186.